

Kentucky Commission
on Human Rights

2013

"Lest We Forget"

**50 YEARS AGO:
NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR 1963**



NATIONAL NEWS

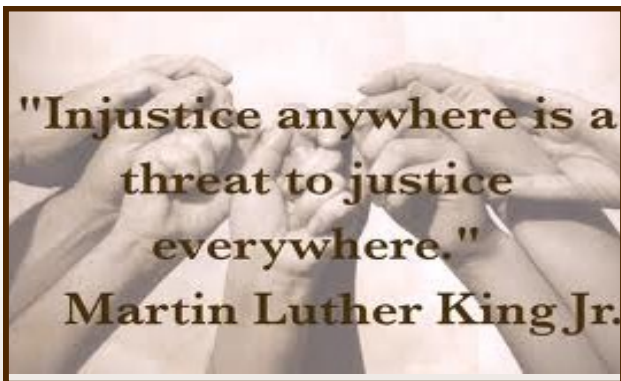
50 Years Ago



Beginning in April, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) joined with Birmingham, Alabama's existing local movement, the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR). The "Birmingham Campaign" was a massive direct action campaign to attack the city's segregation system by putting pressure on merchants during the Easter season, the second biggest shopping season of the year. The campaign consisted of lunch-counter sit-ins, marches on City Hall, and a boycott of downtown merchants.



On April 10th, the City of Birmingham obtained a state court injunction against protests like those initiated by the SNCC and the SCLC. Upon learning of the anti-protest injunction, Martin Luther King, Jr., declared, "We cannot in all good conscience obey such an injunction which is an unjust, undemocratic and unconstitutional misuse of the legal process." On Good Friday, April 12th, King was arrested for violating the injunction.



On April 16th, Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote his famous "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" in which he responded to eight white Alabama ministers who urged him to end the protests and be patient with the judicial process of overturning segregation.



In May, Commissioner of Public Safety Eugene "Bull" Connor used high-powered fire hoses and police dogs on Black demonstrators. These images of brutality, which were televised and published widely, were instrumental in gaining sympathy for the civil rights movement around the world.

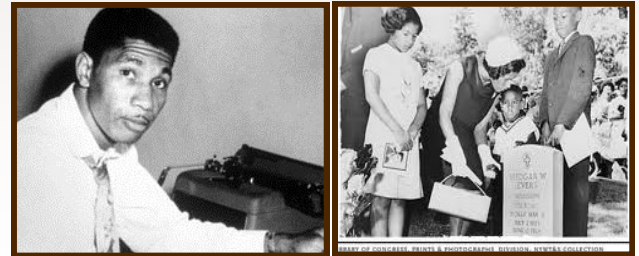
NATIONAL NEWS

50 Years Ago

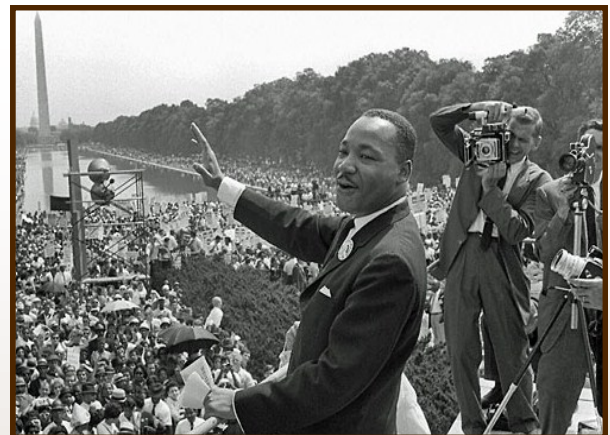
On June 11th, President John F. Kennedy delivered a speech on civil rights from the Oval Office; he specifically explained why he sent the National Guard to allow the admittance of two African-American students to the University of Alabama, in opposition to then Governor George Wallace.



On June 12th, 37-year-old Medgar Evers, the first field secretary for the NAACP in Mississippi, was assassinated by Byron De La Beckwith. Beckwith was tried twice in 1964 with both trials resulting in hung juries. Not until 30 years later was he convicted for murdering Evers.



On August 28th, the March for Jobs and Freedom took place in Washington, DC, where Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his legendary "I Have a Dream" speech. Approximately 250,000 people participated.



On September 15th, four young girls (Denise McNair, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson and Addie Mae Collins) were killed when the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, was bombed while Sunday School classes were in session. Riots erupted in Birmingham, leading to the deaths of two more Black youths.

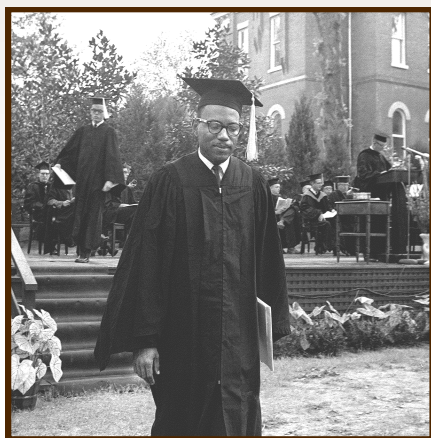


NATIONAL NEWS

50 Years Ago



On November 22nd, Black Americans joined the world in mourning the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. His assassination threatened to slow the growing momentum of the Civil Rights Movement. President Kennedy had publicly committed his administration to the cause of racial equality in the summer of 1963 when he proposed a civil rights bill to Congress and offered his endorsement to the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Kennedy's successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, signed the Civil Rights Act into law on July 2, 1964.



On August 18th, James Meredith graduated from "Ole Miss" (the University of Mississippi). Motivated by President John F. Kennedy's inaugural address, Meredith decided to exercise his constitutional rights and apply to the University of Mississippi. He was the first African American student admitted to this legally imposed segregated university, an event that was a flashpoint in the American civil rights movement.



W.E.B. DuBois, one of the most brilliant African-American intellectuals and a co-founder of the NAACP, died in Accra, Ghana, on August 27th. He studied at Harvard University and in 1895 became the first African American to earn a doctorate from Harvard. DuBois, who became disillusioned with American racial attitudes and the democratic-capitalist system, emigrated to Ghana in 1961. He wrote extensively and was the best known spokesperson for African American rights during the first half of the 20th century.



Ralph J. Bunch (far left) and Marian Anderson (left) were awarded Medals of Freedom, the highest civilian decoration, for outstanding contributions to the ideals of freedom and democracy by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

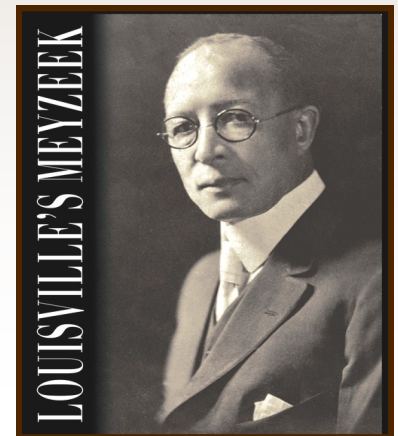
KENTUCKY NEWS

50 Years Ago

By an executive order signed on March 18th by Governor Bert T. Combs, Kentucky became the first southern state to adopt a Governor's Code of Fair Practices that banned segregation in state government and in state contracts. The measure covered such functions as employment and job opportunity, financial assistance, licensing, vocational training and facilities including parks and hospitals.



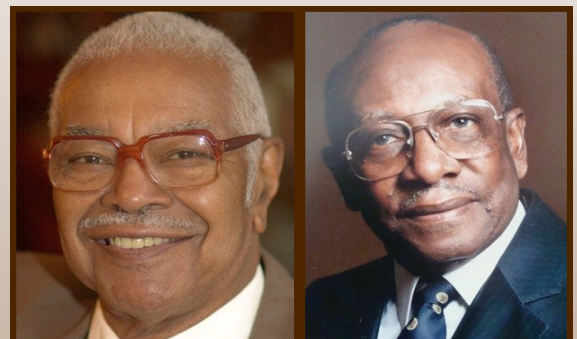
Albert E. Meyzeek, a pioneering educator who also fought for civil rights, died in 1963. He spent many years in Louisville, and a middle school in the city is named for him. Mr. Meyzeek was a charter member of the Kentucky Civil Rights Hall of Fame in 2000 and is also a subject of the Gallery of Great Black Kentuckians poster series sponsored by the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights.



A group of Louisville women formed the West End Community Council (WECC) to encourage peaceful integration of residential neighborhoods. The WECC organized residents of public housing projects to demand garbage pickup and a traffic signal; hosting weekend-long arts festivals where blacks and whites could have fellowship while enjoying music, theater, and dance; and coordinating the fight against poverty in one of the poorest sections of the city.



Harry N. Sykes (right) and Luska J. Twyman (far right) were the first African Americans elected to the city councils of Lexington and Glasgow, respectively. Twyman became mayor of Glasgow in 1969 and later was an appointee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Sykes served four terms on the Lexington City Council and was named Mayor Pro Tem in 1967. In 2005, Sykes was inducted into the Kentucky Civil Rights Hall of Fame.



KENTUCKY NEWS

50 Years Ago



Edward Thompson "Ned" Breathitt, Jr., was elected as Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky in 1963. As a member of the Southern Governors Conference in October 1964, Breathitt was one of three governors to oppose George Wallace's proposed constitutional amendment to give states and state courts sole jurisdiction over their public schools, which would have prevented a federal law from integrating them. His major accomplishment as governor was the 1966 passage of the Kentucky Civil Rights Act, the first desegregation law passed by a southern state.



In 1963, the City of Louisville's Board of Aldermen passed a city ordinance barring discrimination in public accommodations (amended in 1994, 1999, 2001 and 2004).

HERE AND NOW
2013

Equal Opportunity is the Law



FORTUNE MAGAZINE

September 1963 Edition

In 1963, *Fortune Magazine* (now published by Time, Inc., a Time Warner company) was the most highly respected business publication in America. Interestingly, *Fortune* had developed a reputation for its social conscience; the editors encouraged their writers to dig for and write the truth, even if that truth seemed controversial for their readers and for the times at hand.



Below is an excerpt taken from the September 1963 Edition of *Fortune*. An article entitled The Businessman and the Negro stated the following under the sub-heading “The Politics of Repair”:

As J. W. Putsch, president of the National Restaurant Association, told his members in June [1963], “American businessmen are now involved in something greater than a business problem.” They are, in fact, engaged in one of the most far-reaching and important changes in the nation’s history: an attempt to liquidate, in one generation, the consequences of 250 years of

slavery and 100 years of discrimination and neglect. To do so, needless to say, will require difficult and heroic decisions on the part of civic and political as well as business leaders; it will require changes in the behavior of Americans in every walk of life.

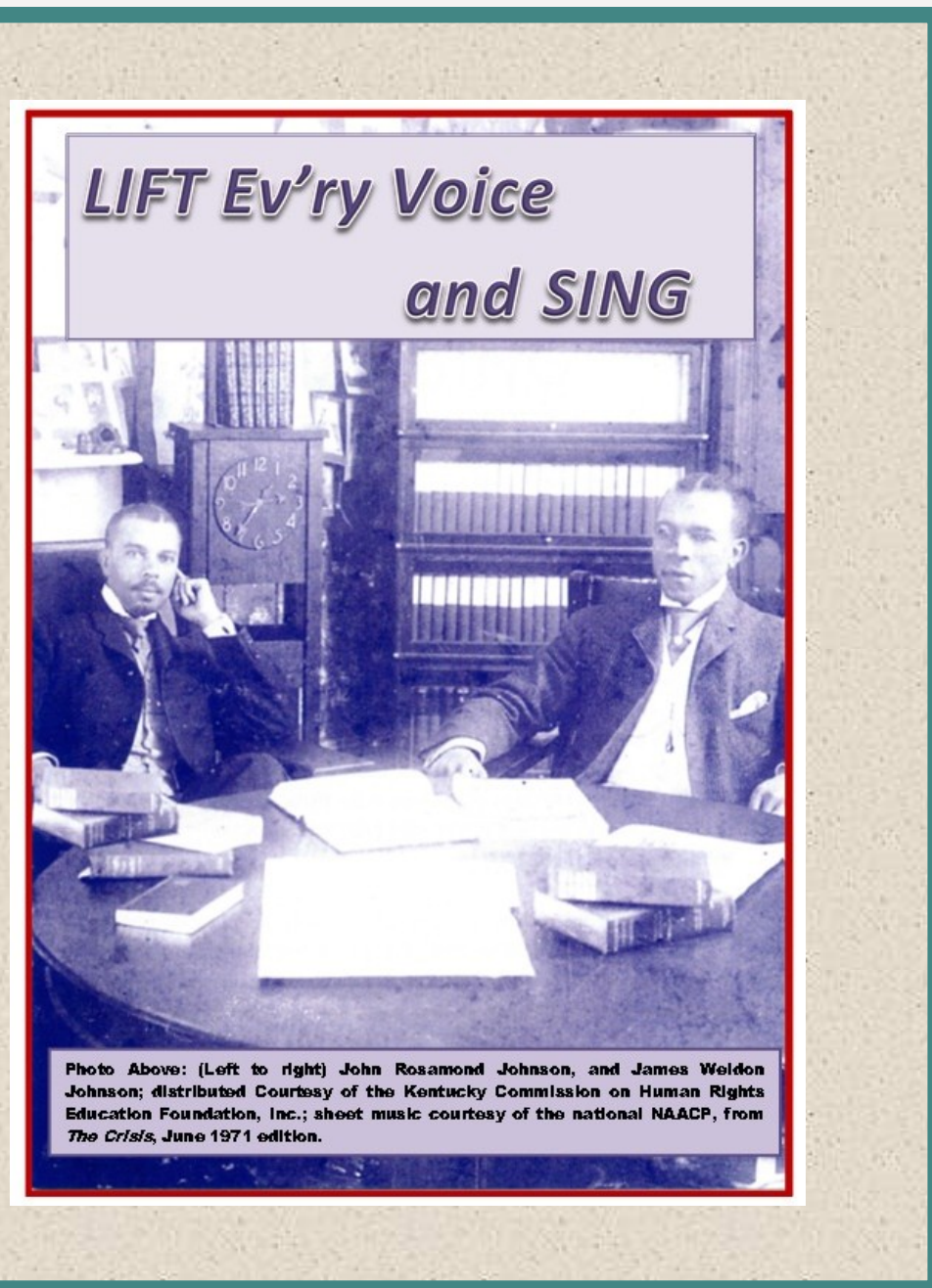
The article further states:

Negroes must gain a sense of potency if they are to move into the mainstream of American life. And power has to be taken; the nature of power is such that it can never be received as a gift. Hence, when businessmen say they’re willing to grant some of the Negro demands, “but not if we’re pushed too hard,” they’re missing the point . . . The years ahead may be harsh and painful but a necessary prelude to the peace that will follow, it is to be hoped.

CULTURAL HISTORY

Pasted into Bibles, school books and hearts, “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing,” written by J. Rosamond Johnson and James Weldon Johnson in 1900, has become one of the most beloved songs in the African American community --- taught for years in schools, churches and civic organizations. Adopted by the NAACP as its official song in the 1920s and sung throughout the civil rights movement, it is still heard today at many NAACP and other gatherings across America.

James Weldon Johnson’s lyrics pay homage to a history of struggle but never waver from a sense of optimism for the future --- “facing the rising sun of our new day begun, let us march on till victory is won...” Its message of hope and strength has made “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing” a source of inspiration for generations.



Lift Ev'ry Voice And Sing

Lyric by
JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

Music by
J. ROSAMOND JOHNSON

Maestoso ben sostenuto



Lift ev'-ry voice and
Ston-y the road we
God of our wea-ry

The first system of the song shows the vocal melody in the upper staff and piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The piano part continues with the established eighth-note bass line and chords. The lyrics are aligned with the vocal melody.

sing, Till earth and heav-en ring, Ring with the har-mo-nies of
trod, Bit-ter the chast'-ning rod. Felt in the days when hope un-
years, God of our si-lent tears, Thou who hast brought us thus far

The second system continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The piano part features a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic marking. The lyrics continue across the system.

CULTURAL HISTORY

Lib - er - ty; Let our re - joic - ing rise High as the
born had died; Yet with a stead - y beat, Have not our
on the way; Thou who hast by Thy might, Led us in -

list - ning skies, Let it re - sound loud as the roll - ing sea,
wear - y feet Come to the place for which our fa - thers sighed;
to the light, Keep us for - ev - er in the path, we pray.

poco meno mosso

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;
We have come o - ver a way that with tears has been wa - tered;
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,

mp poco meno mosso

CULTURAL HISTORY

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of music. The first system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a treble clef and a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The piano accompaniment has a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The tempo markings are *poco a poco rall.* and *allargando*. The lyrics are: "Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought. We have come, tread-ing our path thro' the blood of the slaugh- Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we for - get". The second system also has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo marking is *a tempo*. The lyrics are: "us; Fac-ing the ris-ing sun of our new day be- tered, Out from the gloom-y past. Till now we stand at Thee; Shad-owed be-neath Thy hand, May we for-ev-er". The third system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo marking is *ff*. The lyrics are: "gun, Let us march on till vic-to-ry is won. last Where the white gleam of our bright star is east. stand, True to our God, True to our na-tive land." The piano accompaniment features various dynamics including *ff*, *mf*, and *a tempo*.

poco a poco rall. *allargando*

Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought.
We have come, tread-ing our path thro' the blood of the slaugh-
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we for - get

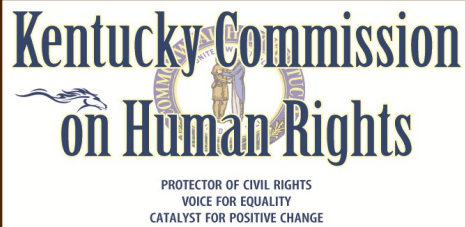
a tempo

us; Fac-ing the ris-ing sun of our new day be-
tered, Out from the gloom-y past. Till now we stand at
Thee; Shad-owed be-neath Thy hand, May we for-ev-er

ff *mf* *a tempo*

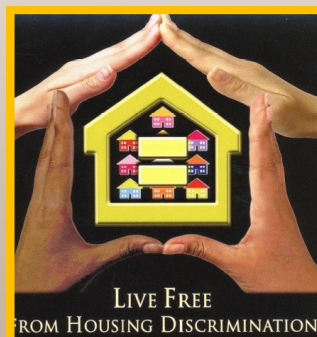
gun, Let us march on till vic-to-ry is won.
last Where the white gleam of our bright star is east.
stand, True to our God, True to our na-tive land.

There is still work to do!



The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights is the state authority that enforces the Kentucky and United States Civil Rights acts, which make discrimination illegal. The Kentucky Civil Rights Act protects people from discrimination in the areas of employment, public accommodations, housing, and financial transactions. It prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color, religion, national origin, disability and gender in all the above areas. It additionally protects people in the area of housing on the basis of familial status, which covers families with children in the household under age 18-years old and covers women who are pregnant. The law additionally protects people in the area of employment on the bases of age, 40-years old and over, and tobacco-smoking status. It is against the law to retaliate against any person who complains of discrimination to the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights.

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